Johnson Asks Governors For Their Help

WASHINGTON (AP)—Here are excerpts from President Johnson's speech to 35 governors at the White House Monday night, as released by the White House:

Gentlemen, I want to tell you how deeply I feel in your debt for not only your coming to Washington on this tragic occasion but for your being so understanding of me and being willing to come here and visit with me this evening.

Circumstances over which I had no control brought me into this position that I occupy tonight. The difficulties and the tributions are great, and this is the time when our whole system has gone on trial, not just the Republican party and the Democratic party but the American system of government.

Challenge of Systems

From the standpoint of population, we have less people than the Soviet Union. From the standpoint of resources, in many respects she has greater resources than we have. She has 8,600,000 tillable acres of land while we have 3,000,000. She has 208 million people while we have 180 million people. She has greater water resources and greater potential oil and power but the thing that is really to determine whether we win or lose in this struggle of philosophies is how well our system works. We think we have the best system.

We think that where a capitalist can put up a dollar, he can get a return on it. A manager can get up early to work and with money and men he can build a better mousetrap. A laborer who is worthy of his hire stands a chance of getting attention and maybe a little profit-sharing system, and the highest minimum wages of any nation in the world.

Those three together combine to give us the end product that we call free enterprise.

I think continuity without confusion has got to be our password and has to be the key to our system. For that reason, I am going to address the Congress on Wednesday. That is the earliest day that they could receive me and I could meet these 70-80 heads of state who have come here from all over the world.

I am going to tell that Congress that we intend to honor the commitments we have made at home and abroad, and I am going to tell them I understand my own limitations, but I am going to do the best I can with your help and God's.

We live under a system of checks and balances. We do so because our founding fathers figured properly that the only sure method of preventing tyranny was a political system in which no one person or no one group or persons can have power without limitations.

The Congress, the executive and the courts all have powers to check each other. This is taken for granted so completely that every school boy knows about our "tri-partite system of government." But what is not realized as commonly is that there is another check—the division of our government into Federal, state, and local systems. Each level of govenment has proper responsibilities and proper prerogatives. And our democracy is richer and more enduring because of this division.

However, there is one point that must always be borne in mind. It is that a government by checks and balances will work only when people are willing to co-operate and work together for the common good. If they insist on glaring at each other, refusing to work together, and standing firmly on prerogatives and forgetting responsibilities, the nation will quickly be paralyzed.

For these reasons, I consider it vitally important to ask for your help. I want you to cooperate. I need your heart and your hand. Our country has suffered a grievous shock. The transition while a term is still going on is always a difficult test for democracy. It is doubly difficult in these days of quick decisions on matters that involve the fate of humanity.

I hope to keep in constant touch with you. My permanent purpose is to maintain the fabric of your nation intact and in the days that lie ahead I hope to work with you to this end.

President Johnson confers with governors.